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Annual overview report of the Administrative Committee on Coordination for 2000

Summary

The present report provides an overview of developments at the inter-agency level during 2000 coming within the purview of the Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC).

ACC continued, during the year, its consideration of the response of the system to the challenges posed by globalization. Particular attention was given to the health and social dimensions of globalization, the role of civil society, and bridging the digital divide.

At its fall 2000 session, following the Millennium Summit of the United Nations, ACC members focused on requirements to ensure a sustained and effective follow-up to the United Nations Millennium Declaration, which they regarded as a key priority for the advocacy policy development and operational activities of the system as a whole.

In addition to outlining the outcome of ACC's discussion on these issues, the report reviews developments at the inter-agency level relating to the follow-up to individual United Nations conferences and summits and preparations for the upcoming events of system-wide importance.

In 2000, ACC, at the initiative of the Secretary-General, also took special initiatives to respond to the drought and food situation in the Horn of Africa. The report describes these initiatives and outlines follow-up activities under way.

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The report also sets out the objectives of the reform process undertaken by ACC during 1999-2000, and describes the resulting streamlining of the ACC subsidiary machinery.

Moreover, the report addresses administrative questions of system-wide concern, focusing on staff security and safety issues. Finally, as requested by the Committee for Programme and Coordination, the report provides information on assistance to countries invoking Article 50 of the Charter of the United Nations.

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Introduction

1. The challenges and opportunities presented by the new millennium have served as a positive force for galvanizing the United Nations system and have provided additional motivation for reinforcing the efforts of the organizations of the system at working together, particularly for a greater impact at the country and regional levels. The imperative of working, as a system, has continued to gain acceptance among member organizations, resulting in increasingly close inter-agency cooperation and collaboration in policy formulation as well as in programme delivery.

2. The interest of the system in developing a common understanding of long-standing as well as emerging issues confronting the international community and particularly the developing countries and in developing integrated and comprehensive approaches to address them has been underpinned by the Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC) reform process (see paras. 62-67 below). These latter efforts are aimed at achieving the dual purpose of enabling a greater focus by the Executive Heads on strategic issues of system-wide concern while enhancing the ability and the capacity of the system to act expeditiously and effectively in the operational and programmatic areas in a way that fully exploits the diverse capacities of United Nations organizations and agencies and maximizes its total impact.

3. It is against this backdrop that the organizations of the United Nations system coming together in ACC continued their efforts, through different instrumentalities of inter-agency cooperation and guided by the policy directions set out by the central intergovernmental bodies, to address the challenges before them in a more integrated and holistic manner. The present overview report on the work of ACC therefore goes beyond the information on the discussions at the regular sessions of ACC and the activities of its standing subsidiary bodies. While the format and content of the overview reports still continue to evolve, an effort is being made, drawing upon the discussions of the Economic and Social Council and the Committee for Programme and Coordination (CPC) and on the experience of inter-agency cooperation within the system, to provide an insight into the state of inter-agency cooperation and collaboration within the system, into how policy guidance provided by the central intergovernmental bodies is shaping and impacting upon the programmes and activities within the system and, finally, into how inter-agency work feeds back into the intergovernmental processes to reinforce and support policy-setting by member States.

4. The contours of such an approach were elaborated in paragraphs 9-11 of the annual overview report of ACC for the year 1999 (E/2000/53) and the approach was welcomed by the Economic and Social Council and CPC. This approach is continued in the present report which, in addition, provides concrete examples of actions taken by the organizations of the United Nations system on the basis of the overall policy framework established by ACC pursuant to intergovernmental decisions. Complementing the information available on an ongoing basis on the proceedings of ACC at its regular session and the work of its subsidiary bodies, the regular briefings provided to the Economic and Social Council, and the reports of the Council's functional commissions and other intergovernmental bodies, which are increasingly receiving integrated secretariat support from the system as a whole through the ACC subsidiary machinery, this report aims to assist member States in assessing the progress being made in building synergies and enhancing coordination throughout the system, and contribute to a more dynamic, productive and comprehensive dialogue between ACC and the central intergovernmental bodies. Such a dialogue should serve to enhance the responsiveness of the system to intergovernmental directions and, in turn, to strengthen the capacity of intergovernmental bodies to provide well-informed, effective guidance within which the coordination work of ACC is to be pursued.

I. Globalization and the United Nations system

5. Responding to the importance attached by member States to policy issues relating to globalization, ACC continued its reflection on the demands placed on national and international systems by the new global environment. The process, launched in the fall of 1998, was aimed at setting the broad elements of a common inter-agency agenda for the future, in the context of the reforms under way in the system. The Executive Heads committed themselves to a unified effort to tackle the development challenges arising from globalization and reviewed the system's

policies and actions in addressing the adverse effects of financial crises. At its spring 1999 session, ACC focused on the interactions between organizations of the system and the private sector and expressed support for the initiative launched by the Secretary-General to engage the business community as partners in promoting universal norms in the areas of human rights, labour standards and environmental protection. At a retreat held in conjunction with that session, ACC carried out a broad review of the strengths and weaknesses of the United Nations system, the basic objectives and values that define its identity, the basic components of a shared vision of its role and the challenges it faces, and ways to forge and reinforce strategic alliances within the system and with other development actors. This discussion was pursued in October 1999 under the broad heading of "The institutional and programmatic capacity of the United Nations system to respond flexibly and effectively to the challenges of the twenty-first century". ACC reiterated that poverty eradication and the promotion of equity at the national, regional and international levels, based on the outcomes of global conferences and summits, continue to be the system's overarching goals.

6. Recognizing the need for deepening its collective analysis of the many interrelated dimensions of globalization and their implications for the work of the system, ACC continued its reflection during 2000 on the impact of globalization, focusing at its first regular session, on the interrelationships between trade and economic, social and environmental dimensions and on the issue of information technology (see ACC/2000/4). At its fall session, ACC took up the issue of health and other social implications of globalization as well as financing for development in view of the important forthcoming events focusing on these two topics.

7. Subsequently, at their October 2000 retreat, Executive Heads began relating the outcome of their reflections on the process of globalization to the response of the system to the United Nations Millennium Declaration.[1] They concluded that the promotion of an effective follow-up to the United Nations Millennium Declaration adopted at the Millennium Summit of the United Nations should be a key priority for the advocacy, policy development and operational activities of the system as a whole. Their conclusions reiterated the crucial need for integrated approaches and mutually reinforcing responses by the system, as a condition for ACC to make an effective contribution to the key goal, embodied in the United Nations Millennium Declaration, of making globalization work for all. They gave particular attention in this context to the provisions of the United Nations Millennium Declaration concerning poverty eradication and development. The coherence of the system's country-level actions was considered key to its efforts to contribute to the eradication of poverty. Sections I and II of this report elaborate on the broad conclusions reached by ACC in addressing these issues.

Making globalization a positive force for all

8. As indicated above, ACC continued to deepen its shared understanding of the synergies that have to be fostered among the different dimensions of globalization (financial, economic, social, cultural, technological and human rights), so as to strengthen the knowledge base required for the development of integrated approaches that can serve to bridge the growing divides that globalization is bringing about in many areas, and to spread the benefits of globalization to all.

9. This process of reflection has served to further reinforce ACC members' realizations that a condition for the United Nations system to respond effectively to the challenges of globalization, and to help make it work for the world's people, is the working together of United Nations agencies on a broad front, utilizing, in a mutually reinforcing way, their respective strengths, constituencies and mandates to advance shared values and objectives. ACC reiterated that the overriding objective of the system remains contributing to ending poverty and making it possible for all to earn a decent living. Executive Heads agreed that in order to harness the forces of globalization to these ends, the United Nations system must collectively help address a twin challenge of integration: first, the integration and effective participation of all countries in the global economy and the international trading system; and second, a better integration of the economic sphere with the social, cultural and environmental spheres, so as to promote the new balance among the various dimensions of globalization that is necessary to ensure that the benefits of globalization can be equitably shared, internationally as well as nationally.

10. In relation to the first challenge, Executive Heads stressed the need for organizations of the system to work together to promote a new round of trade negotiations with greater participation of developing countries and to address decisively the problems being faced by these countries, and particularly the least developed among them, in relation to both market access and improvements in their infrastructure and productive capacity. They also recognized in this context the importance for the system to continue to support developing countries in improving their infrastructures and strengthening their productive capacities.

11. The second challenge — that of promoting better balance among the various dimensions of globalization — implies advocating shared values of equity and sustainability and strengthening the global institutions that operate in the social and environmental spheres alongside those working in the economic, trade and financial areas. It also requires engaging the private sector in furthering the United Nations system's development, environmental, human rights and labour standards agendas. Strengthening the institutional basis for the implementation of multilateral environmental agreements and of internationally agreed labour standards was seen as the most effective way of advancing the environmental and social agendas, without overloading the World Trade Organization dispute settlement mechanisms.

12. Reinforcing the norm-setting role of the United Nations system was seen as a vital condition for progress. The general view was that "international law and norms must become an integral part of the language of globalization". Globalization touched on the activities of all agencies, from meteorology and maritime safety to education and the environment. ACC recognized that all organizations of the system were actively engaged in addressing different dimensions of globalization through their individual mandates and perspectives which further underscored the need to understand better interlinkages among these dimensions and to develop more integrated approaches among United Nations system organizations as well as promote such approaches among member States and in the wider international community.

The health and social dimensions of globalization

13. As a follow-up to its discussions in April 2000, ACC continued its reflection on the impact of globalization, focusing on the health and the social sectors at its session in October. To prepare for the discussion, the Director-General of the World Health Organization (WHO) convened an Executive Heads-level task force at the request of the Secretary-General. *The task force, and the ACC meeting itself, identified the central challenge before the system as making globalization a positive force for all and influencing its process and impact to bring benefits to poor people.*

14. ACC noted that health provided especially telling examples of the many positive but also the many negative impacts of globalization. In health, as in other sectors, the focus of the system should be on those areas where the market alone cannot deliver positive results and on identifying key priorities in public policy interventions that can serve to address market distortions and maximize beneficial solutions for all. The health sector was seen as an area where integrated, system-wide initiatives were particularly essential to meet the many challenges before the international community, from human immunodeficiency virus/acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (HIV/AIDS) to malaria, tuberculosis and childhood diseases. It was also an area where it was imperative for the United Nations system to engage civil society and the private sector in constructive partnerships.

15. In designing the orientation of its future work on globalization, ACC recognized the crucial role that the system, collectively, should play to build the knowledge and evidence base required to help develop effective, integrated responses capable of positively influencing globalization processes and their social impact, and of bringing real benefits to the poor. It was observed, in this regard, that globalization had not altered some of the basic variables that made for social progress. The responsibility of Governments for public policy and social outcomes remains as critical as ever. The imperative of growth and the synergies among economic, social and environmental policies that make for sustainable development are comprehensively addressed in the outcomes and programmes of action adopted at the global conferences of the 1990s. Their policy prescriptions remain entirely valid and continue to provide the framework of policies, responsibilities

and mutual commitments within which responses to the challenges of globalization should be set. At the same time, as globalization gains momentum, the interrelationships among its many dimensions that need to be factored in for effective policy-making, and in working towards a rule-based international system that is and is perceived as fundamentally fair, are becoming increasingly complex. The collective capacities of the system need to be harnessed to enrich and expand the knowledge base required nationally as well as internationally to broaden perspectives, act to address potential conflicts such as between trade rules and global, social and environmental goals, and maximize mutual reinforcement among policies and actions in different sectors in support of poverty eradication and development.

16. Greater awareness is also needed of "global negatives" — illicit drugs, transnational crime, tobacco — and of ways in which globalization is fostering them, leading to a more effective integration of the policy and regulatory framework required to address them into the overall actions being promoted to spread and maximize the potential benefits of globalization.

17. Along with helping address "global negatives", as well as the growing divides and increasing complexities that globalization has brought about, the system is uniquely placed to help ensure that the new instrumentalities — the new information and communication technologies (ICT) — that globalization offers are effectively brought to bear both in support of effective policy development, and in spreading opportunities for growth and equitable development. The system is also increasingly acting to engage actors in civil society and the private sector who are indispensable partners for any effort to positively influence globalization processes. ACC's reflections on some of these issues are outlined below.

18. In pursuing its consideration of the social dimensions of globalization, at its next session in April 2001, ACC will benefit from an analysis and proposals presented to it by the Director-General of the International Labour Organization (I! O).

Role of the civil society

19. At their fall retreat (see below), in the context of their continuing consideration of the system's responses to globalization, the Executive Heads addressed again the role of the civil society. It was felt that the issues raised by the manifestations that had characterized the World Trade Organization conference in Seattle and the Bretton Woods institutions' meetings in Prague should be of concern to the whole of the United Nations system, and needed to be addressed at different levels. At one level, they raised the question of representativeness, accountability and transparency within the community of non-governmental organizations, which should be encouraged to undertake a process of self-examination, and to strengthen self-regulation including the elaboration of principles of constructive discourse. At the inter-agency level, a more systematic sharing of information on practices and experiences in engaging with non-governmental organizations in different aspects of the workings of the system was highly desirable.

20. It was generally felt that recent events pointed to the need for a greater public understanding of the different functions, as well as limitations, of the various organizations of the system and, in that context, of the respective roles of Governments on the one hand, and the organizations themselves and their secretariats on the other. At the same time, these events had once again brought to the fore the need for the system to address the fears and anxieties that globalization was engendering in society. There was a perception that power was shifting not to people as citizens and consumers, but to faceless institutions and processes which people feel they could not influence. The United Nations system should be conscious of these perceptions; point to the accountability and transparency mechanisms that are built in the functioning of the different agencies (from the tripartite structure of ILO, to the requirements for parliamentary ratification of World Trade Organization legal instruments); and continue to expand its outreach to all elements of civil society, from parliamentarians and local authorities to professional societies. Ultimately, the system should help allay these concerns by contributing to the establishment of a level playing field in international relations, and helping make globalization work for all.

21. The Executive Heads acknowledged that, while non-governmental organizations were one of a range of instruments of transparency and outreach available to the system, they have been key partners of the system in balancing country-specific interests, and advancing, at both the national and the international levels, the

United Nations system's economic, social and human rights agenda. While the increasing openness in which the system entertains its relations with non-governmental organizations should find reflection in a renewed effort on the part of the non-governmental organizations community at self-policing and respecting the system's rules and procedures, this is a partnership that remains essential to the capacity of the system to advance its objectives, including the ambitious targets at the Millennium Summit of the United Nations.

22. The Executive Heads decided, in this context, to strengthen arrangements for a continuous exchange of information on experiences concerning interaction with civil society, and to draw lessons from best practices for the benefit of the system as a whole.

Bridging the digital divide

23. ACC's deliberations on information and communication technologies (ICT) focused more broadly on the contribution ICT could make in advancing some of the basic objectives that the system was endeavouring to support and advance: the integration of developing countries in the global knowledge society, and the pursuit of growth and efficiency in key sectors of the economy, in ways that serve to further the social and cultural goals of societies. Executive Heads recognized the great potentials of ICT as well as the major obstacles in the way of its universal spread. They considered that the closest inter-agency collaboration in integrating ICT into the United Nations system's operations and in helping developing countries bridge the digital divide was essential for the system to remain effective and relevant in a rapidly changing global environment.

24. ACC members shared a strong conviction that ICT and the Internet had great potential for accelerating sustainable development, although for the extreme poor basic necessities would obviously remain a priority. They analysed the factors contributing to the digital divide and inhibiting a greater spread of ICT and reviewed the lessons to be drawn from the successful experiences of several developing countries in tapping ICT for development. ACC noted, in this context, that there were many opportunities for productive South-South cooperation that had not, as yet, been fully exploited and that should be supported by the system. More generally, it was felt that the scope for strengthening inter-agency collaboration, inter alia, at the country level, was considerable, in providing support for the development of national ICT support strategies, but also in specific areas of computerization, networking and software development.

25. Given the role of the private sector as the main engine for ICT development and Internet connectivity, engaging the private sector as a partner in this effort was generally recognized as essential. There are already in this respect many promising partnership experiences under way, such as the health and disaster relief networks, which can, and should, be built upon. Cutting across the internal needs of the system and its development support functions, it was the shared view of Executive Heads that the main focus of the coordination effort should not be on ICT alone, and that it should extend to developing a knowledge-sharing and learning culture, and on building effective knowledge acquisition and dissemination capacities throughout the system.

26. ACC agreed to pursue a wide range of ideas that included: strengthening inter-agency collaboration in computerization, networking and software development as well as in developing country ICT support strategies; setting up a system-wide community of ICT experts and users; promoting innovative and focused use of ICT in support of isolated and/or distant areas; carrying out further studies on the social and cultural impact of ICT; further expanding partnerships with the private sector; and undertaking a comprehensive inventory of systems being used or under development within the system, including communications between headquarters and the field.

27. Executive Heads agreed to update the "ACC statement on universal access to basic communication and information services" (ACC/1997/4, annex I) adopted in 1997 to reflect subsequent developments and emerging new technologies and reiterated its call for the principles in that statement to be actively followed up by the organizations of the system. They also authorized the preparation of a further ACC statement, based on the outcome of its current discussions, for submission to the Economic and Social Council at its 2001 high-level segment.

28. ACC members expressed strong support for the Council's initiative in having taken up the issue of ICT at its 2000 high-level segment in July 2000, and contributed actively to it through inputs to the

preparatory process as well as through active senior-level participation in the segment itself.

29. A number of developments have since taken place, which are of relevance to the system as a whole. One such development is the appointment of Jose María Figueres-Olsen, former President of Costa Rica, as the Secretary-General's Special Representative on ICT and the establishment of the Information and Communication Technologies Advisory Group. The Advisory Group, which brought together experts from international agencies, Governments and private businesses and foundations of both developed and developing countries, was charged with drawing up on the basis of guidelines set by the Economic and Social Council modalities for the functioning of the Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) Task Force mandated by the Council at its 2000 high-level segment, as an innovative instrument to assist in bridging the digital divide between developed and developing countries and harnessing the potential of technology for development. Developments in this regard were the subject of a briefing organized by the President of the General Assembly in conjunction with the President of the Council at the end of 2000, which also addressed arrangements for harmonizing this initiative and the dot.force launched by the G-8. The Council has since acted on the recommendations of the Secretary-General based on the advice of the Advisory Group and it is expected that the Task Force will be fully operational by the fall of 2001.

30. Reference should also be made to the establishment by the World Bank of the Global Development Gateway (GDG), a portal of local and global knowledge on development providing space for transacting, researching, knowledge-sharing, networking and learning on development issues. GDG is a multi-partner initiative of public and private organizations, as well as civil society worldwide, that would bring together different actors, governmental and private, as well as ideas and experiences on development. GDG is based on existing networks and will, among other advantages, improve knowledge-sharing on aid activities and reduce costs of doing business in emerging markets. Three challenges were identified in this regard: first, to build an integrated system of high-quality, easy-to-use and sustainable development portals; second, to meet the needs of highly diverse development groups; and third, to form a coalition of development partners to contribute to the Gateway.

31. Another development relates to the setting up of a high-tech volunteer corps, the "United Nations Information Technology Service", known as UNITeS, as part of the efforts to help bridge the digital divide. First proposed in paragraph 166 of the Secretary-General report to the Millennium Assembly of the United Nations (A/54/2000) entitled "We the peoples: the role of the United Nations in the twenty-first century", UNITeS allows people from any country to volunteer their skills and time to extend the benefits of the digital revolution to developing countries. Coordinated by the United Nations Volunteers (UNV) programme, UNITeS functions through an international network of institutions from both South and North. Services are provided by on-site volunteers and by online volunteers. The volunteers work with the developing country partners to strengthen capacities for applying ICT to human development, in particular in areas such as health, education, environment and small and micro-enterprises.

32. ACC has also continued to be briefed by the Secretary-General of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) on the draft action plan and on the preparations for the World Summit on the Information Society scheduled for 2003. The preparatory process will involve extensive regional consultations and the participation of a wide range of actors from the public and private sectors, as well as civil society. Organizations of the system are actively supporting the World Summit, inter alia, through the participation of ACC members in a steering committee responsible for the preparatory process.

II. Millennium Summit of the United Nations and its follow-up

33. ACC held a retreat in conjunction with its fall 2000 session to continue the discussion on the Millennium Summit of the United Nations initiated at its last retreat in April 1999 where the foous had been on the contribution of the system towards the preparation of the Millennium Summit and Millennium Assembly of the United Nations. The principal objective was to engage in a joint reflection on concrete ways for the system to advance the objectives set out in the Millennium Declaration.

34. The Executive Heads noted that the United Nations Millennium Declaration, unanimously adopted by the Millennium Summit, had set out clear principles and goals and challenges firmly rooted in the Charter of the United Nations but that also admirably reflect present-day realities. They especially appreciated the fact that the concept put forward by the Secretary-General that "we must put people at the centre of everything we do" was strongly reflected in the United Nations Millennium Declaration; the Summit's reference to the United Nations as "the indispensable common house of the entire human family"; and its wish to make the United Nations system a more vital and effective tool in the hands of all the world's peoples. They took note of the resolve of the world leaders "to ensure greater policy coherence and better cooperation between the United Nations, its agencies, the Bretton Woods institutions and the World Trade Organization, as well as other multilateral bodies, with a view to achieving a fully coordinated approach to the problems of peace and development" (see General Assembly resolution 55/2, para. 30). They noted that this indeed was a key component of the mission role of ACC and considered that, in order to benefit from the necessary political backing for the many challenging tasks of the United Nations system, they must act and respond as a unified team.

35. The Secretary-General invited Executive Heads to consider innovative ways to strengthen the United Nations system's capacity to support an effective follow-up to the outcome of the Millennium Summit, observing that each and every component of the system had a distinct contribution to make in meeting the Summit's objectives. He encouraged them, in this context, to reflect on ways in which forthcoming events within the system could draw political impetus from the Summit's outcome. In that light, Executive Heads addressed ways for the organizations of the system to work together to carry forward the key goals and targets set at the Summit around three sets of themes: poverty and development; the environment; and the rule of law, human rights and peace and security.

36. The Secretary-General pointed out that, in relation to poverty and development, the United Nations Millennium Declaration had set precise quantitative targets, challenging the system to identify specific actions to be taken to bring the goals of the United Nations Millennium Declaration within reach, and ways for the organizations of the system to support each other in doing so. The forthcoming high-level international intergovernmental event on financing for development provided a very timely opportunity to advance a key dimension of the development goals set in the Millennium Declaration. The Secretary-General further recalled that the second theme — protecting the environment — had been highlighted in his report to the Millennium Summit because he felt that, in the long run it might prove to be most important in shaping the future of humanity. It was satisfying that this crucial concern had ultimately been duly recognized in the Summit's outcome. Finally, the Secretary-General noted that, while the set of issues clustered under the rubric of the rule of law, human rights and peace and security might appear to be somewhat disparate, these were in fact very closely interconnected. Respect for human rights, democracy and the rule of law were increasingly recognized as essential elements, both in conflict prevention and in building peace or rebuilding it in the wake of conflict. The system needed to work together to strengthen these pillars of peace, while at the same time reinforcing linkage between its peacekeeping and peace-building efforts on the one hand, and its development work on the other. In relation to each of the themes, the Secretary-General asked Executive Heads to focus on new initiatives and policy interventions likely to have real impact on achieving the overall targets set at the Summit.

37. Executive Heads recalled the staggering magnitude of global poverty: over one fifth of humanity lived on under $1 a day, including 800 million in Asia and 300 million in Africa. They reiterated that the coherence of the system's country level actions was key to its contribution to poverty eradication. Special emphasis was thus placed on the importance of getting country level cooperation among all United Nations system partners right, based on comprehensive national level programmes "owned" by the country, and a clear division of labour between organizations of the system in support of the country's efforts. It was felt that the strong consensus that now existed throughout United Nations agencies and the Bretton Woods institutions on the key concepts of partnerships and country ownership, and the positive experience that was being gained in a growing number of countries in relating different instruments for country level cooperation so that they would help reinforce country ownership and reinforce each other, provided a strong new basis for a decisive move towards a common system-wide framework for country

level action. Any such framework should reflect a comprehensive approach to development, geared to stimulating economic growth as a basic underlying factor for a sustained attack on poverty, and encompassing and integrating structural, social and institutional reform and pro-poor policies and programmes. The sequencing of interventions in different areas and their timing will be critical to the effectiveness of the framework. This will vary from country to country and should be a crucial focus of the leadership to be provided by the country concerned. Supporting the exercise of this leadership, through the provision of coherent advice and of focused assistance in key areas of capacity-building, should be a common priority for the system. The capacity of the framework to fully engage not only the Government concerned and the system as a whole, but also bilaterals, the private sector and civil society, will be another important condition for its impact and sustainability. An integral part of the effort should be a more continuous and systematic exchange of data and analysis, drawing on ICT and jointly supported information systems, and the refinement of instruments for measuring and monitoring performance.

38. Executive Heads further recognized that, in order to contribute to progress in achieving the development and poverty eradication goals of the Millennium Summit, the system should strive, at the same time, not only to strengthen country level support but also to enhance policy coherence towards the creation of a more supportive international environment. This implies contributing to reinforcing the role of the multilateral system in the management of globalization — an objective that had found strong reaffirmation at the Summit — and also strengthening policy coherence within the system itself. In this respect, it was felt that the role of the United Nations within the system would be effective to the extent that participatory approaches were pursued, and the United Nations built on its role as a forum where the competencies of different agencies could be drawn together and where their respective constituencies were engaged in a dialogue towards common, overriding objectives. The success of the high-level international intergovernmental event on financing for development was seen in this light. In the same context, it was noted that realities with regard to the state of national level coordination and the balance of forces among different national ministries had to be taken into account: the system naturally reflected these realities. At the same time, the efforts of the system to promote more integrated approaches to development — for example, a more effective integration of environmental and social dimensions in macroeconomic policies — should contribute over time to better balanced decision-making processes also at the national level. In this perspective, ACC has a potentially very important contribution to make as a forum where United Nations organizations and agencies come together on the basis of mutual respect, making it possible for Executive Heads to bring back to their respective constituencies a sense of the ways in which each sector and each agency can maximize its contribution to the common effort.

39. ACC's contribution to policy coherence and overall progress should not be limited to the elaboration of common, comprehensive approaches to development and the development of a common framework for country level action, but should extend to the identification of global public goods and of the balances and synergies that need to be created among them to strengthen international governance, further policy coherence and advance the goals set at the Summit. ACC should give priority to the task of elaborating a coherent structure of such public goods and organizing leadership responsibilities for them among the organizations of the system.

40. Executive Heads also shared the view of the Secretary-General that the issue of the environment was key among the global public goods to be advanced by the system as a whole. A number of factors that may have led to a reduced focus on environmental issues in the recent period were discussed. The responses advocated included: the development of reliable science-based assessments and impact analyses; the strengthening of environmental law and enforcement mechanisms; a major effort at people-focused advocacy, with particular reference to youth education and mobilization; enhanced focus on local concerns such as water, agriculture, fisheries and rural energy; highlighting linkages between poverty and the environment; the identification of success stories at the local level involving mutually reinforcing actions in different areas impinging on the environment; and a more effective integration of environmental concerns in national coordination frameworks for operational activities.

41. A concerted advocacy effort, highlighting linkages between local and global concerns, and elaborating relationships with poverty eradication and

development, was also seen as crucial in advancing the objectives of the United Nations Millennium Declaration in the area of the rule of law, human rights and peace and security. Vital as they are, these linkages are not easily discernible or demonstrable. Advocacy had to be based on objective, credible analyses, drawing on the uniquely wide-ranging experience and capacities of the system as a whole. The conference review processes and other events sponsored by the system in the period ahead should be systematically utilized for this purpose. In addition to advocacy, the technical advice and operational work of the system should build on the provisions of the Millennium Declaration and be geared to furthering its objectives. National plans of action should be encouraged and their integration into the CCA/United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) processes should be sought. The system should also endeavour to strengthen mechanisms to monitor progress, cooperating in this effort with civil society and drawing on the work of relevant treaty bodies.

42. Executive Heads concluded that the promotion of an effective follow-up to the United Nations Millennium Declaration should be a key priority for the advocacy, policy development and operational activities of the system as a whole. The system-wide effort should encompass a strengthening and refinement of instruments for the sharing of information and for monitoring and measuring progress. Executive Heads expressed their readiness to actively contribute to periodic reporting by the Secretary-General on progress in achieving the objectives of the United Nations Millennium Declaration. It was observed that the issuance of such reports as a system-wide initiative would not only contribute significantly to the coherence and impact of the system's outreach effort but also help promote greater consistency and mutual reinforcement among the main surveys and publications currently issued within the system.

III. Inter-agency follow-up to conferences and summits

A. Five-year review of the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action

43. The United Nations system continued to assist in advancing the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action.[2] In the ACC statement (A/S-23/8, annex) to the General Assembly at its twenty-third special session entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty first century" (5-9 June 2000), commitment was made to the full implementation of the Beijing Declaration[3] and Platform for Action and the achievement of gender equality as essential for the reduction and eradication of poverty, and the achievement of peace, human rights and sustainable development. The statement identified specific actions to be taken by ACC members to assist member Governments and civil society to accelerate implementation of the Platform for Action and gender mainstreaming. The statement also addressed the steps to be taken internally by ACC members to assure gender equality within their own organizations.

44. The General Assembly at its twenty-third special session adopted a document entitled "Further actions and initiatives to implement the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action"[4] which outlines actions and initiatives required to ensure the full implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action, taking into account global changes, new challenges and experience accumulated on important gender equality issues, since the convening of the Fourth World Conference on Women. This outcome document together with the ACC statement to the Assembly at its twenty-third special session, provides the basis for continued action to incorporate gender perspectives into the work of the United Nations entities. Within the inter-agency framework, organizations of the United Nations system, including the Bretton Woods institutions, the World Trade Organization and the regional entities, continued their efforts to support Governments in the implementation of the Platform for Action and, as appropriate, developing their own complementary programmes.

45. Among the many initiatives being pursued within the system, attention is drawn to the renewed effort led by the United Nations to encourage, through training workshops, universal ratification of both the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women[5] and the Optional Protocol thereto,[6] as well as reporting under the Convention and use of the mechanisms provided in the Optional Protocol, as recommended in the outcome document entitled "Further actions and initiatives to implement the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action" of the twenty-third special session of the

General Assembly. The most recent, in collaboration with the Government of New Zealand, the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), covered the South Pacific region, and was attended by government and non-governmental organization representatives from 14 States of the region. Another example of cooperative action relevant to the follow-up to the Beijing Conference is an expert meeting on "The HIV/AIDS Pandemic and its Gender Implications", jointly organized by the United Nations, the World Health Organization (WHO) and the Joint United Nations Programme on Human Immunodeficiency Virus/Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome (UNAIDS). The objective of the meeting was to contribute to a better understanding of the interplay between gender and the HIV/AIDS pandemic and to provide input towards the report of the Secretary-General on this subject to the Commission on the Status of Women.

B. Five-year review of the implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development

46. The results of the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly entitled "World Summit for Social Development and beyond: achieving social development for all in a globalizing world" (26 June-1 July 2000) were highly significant. Coming from 178 countries, more than 5,000 people attended the conference, and 2,000 participants were members of delegations, led mostly by ministers. Nineteen heads of State or Government also attended. The General Assembly at its special session adopted the document entitled "Further initiatives for social development"[7] which includes a political declaration on the centrality of more equitable, socially just and people-centred societies;[8] an assessment of developments since the 1995 World Summit for Social Development;[9] and a set of new initiatives.[10]

47. The General Assembly at its twenty-fourth special session also agreed on a global target for poverty reduction: halving the proportion of people living in extreme poverty by 2015. This is implicitly understood to include all people with incomes of less than $1 per day — an estimated 1.2 billion individuals. This target was enshrined in the United Nations Millennium Declaration. A decision to launch a more integrated global campaign to reduce poverty was also taken.[11] Preparation of an international employment strategy by the International Labour Organization (ILO) will begin with a global employment forum in 2001. These are among the 40 or so substantial, fresh initiatives or new international agreements for action set out in the Declaration. Others include: recognition that achievement of the agreed target of access to basic education for all by 2015 will cost about $8 billion a year; action through trade agreements and increased incentives for research to improve access of developing countries to affordable and effective pharmaceuticals; strengthened commitment to basic workers' rights, and to social protection for the vulnerable; recommendations for national targets and major new action to reduce HIV/AIDS infection rates; and a call for all United Nations agencies to integrate more effective health policies into their programmes in other areas.

48. As part of the follow-up to the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly, all agencies, funds and programmes of the United Nations system are preparing reports on progress achieved and obstacles encountered in the implementation of the Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development[12] and Programme of Action of the World Summit for Social Development[13] and the further initiatives for social development adopted at the special session. An inter-agency consultation with participation of representatives of more than 20 agencies, funds and programmes was convened in New York to provide an opportunity, on an informal basis, to report on programmes and plans for follow-up to specific mandates and recommendations and to discuss further action on cross-cutting themes. Eighteen entities within the United Nations system have submitted progress reports on activities and initiatives undertaken since Geneva to implement the goals of the Summit and the special session. A compilation of summaries of the agency reports[14] was released on 13 February 2001 in connection with the thirty-ninth session of the Commission for Social Development. The compilation showed that nearly all parts of the United Nations system were giving careful consideration to the outcome of the special session and contained a range of concrete examples of how the agencies, funds and programmes were implementing specific recommendations and initiatives. This is a strong testament to the broad involvement and deep

commitment by the United Nations system to the social development objectives of the Summit and the special session.

C. United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and the High-level Political Signing Conference

49. In preparation for the High-level Political Signing Conference in Palermo, Italy (12-15 December 2000), at which the United Nations Convention on Transnational Organized Crime[15] would be opened for signature, the Executive Director of the United Nations International Drug Control Programme (UNDCP) briefed ACC on the importance of the Convention and the Signing Conference in the international community's struggle to stem transnational organized crime. The Convention criminalizes participation in an organized crime group, money-laundering, corruption and the obstruction of justice and addresses issues such as mutual legal assistance, extradition, protection of witnesses and victims, and law enforcement cooperation as well as prevention. The Convention and the High-level Political Signing Conference are expected to advance the objective of the United Nations Millennium Declaration "to intensify our efforts to fight transnational crime in all its dimensions" (see para. 9 thereof). The subjects of three protocols supplementing the Convention (the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children,[16] the Protocol against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air,[17] and the international instrument combating the illicit manufacturing of and trafficking in firearms, their parts and components and ammunition) also reflect areas specifically mentioned in the United Nations Millennium Declaration, namely, trafficking in and smuggling of human beings and illicit traffic in small arms and light weapons. ACC underscored the importance of the Convention and urged all its members to extend full support to its follow-up and implementation.

D. World Education Forum

50. On the basis of a briefing by the Director-General of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), ACC took up the follow-up and implementation of the Dakar Framework for Action[18] adopted by the World Education Forum in April 2000. It should be noted that shortly prior to the Dakar meeting, ACC adopted a statement on the United Nations 10-year programme on girls' education (ACC/2000/4, annex) as its contribution to the World Education Forum. At the ACC session in October 2000, it was pointed out that while national Governments had the primary role in implementing the Dakar Framework for Action, the United Nations system had a vital role to play in supporting the efforts of member States and other development partners (see ACC/2000/20, para. 53). To ensure effective and coherent support by the system, UNESCO will work closely with the United Nations Development Group at the global level and will integrate the Dakar Framework for Action in the programming and funding tools at the country level.

E. International Strategy for Disaster Reduction

51. In the course of the year, ACC noted the progress achieved in the implementation of General Assembly resolution 54/219 of 22 December 1999 on the successor arrangements to the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction. It invited the Inter-Agency Task Force on Disaster Reduction established pursuant to the resolution to give special emphasis to building and strengthening capacities of disaster-prone countries through scientific research and training of experts. Since then, the Task Force has held a number of meetings and established working groups to address a wide range of issues. ACC requested the Task Force to continue to place particular emphasis on monitoring, prediction, early warning and preparedness in relation to natural disasters, and on the prominent role of science and technology in its work.

IV. United Nations response to long-term food security in the Horn of Africa

52. At the first regular session of ACC in 2000, the Secretary-General briefed the Executive Heads on the initiative he had taken to respond to the serious drought and food situation in the Horn of Africa. In the first instance, he requested the Executive Director of the

World Food Programme (WFP) to undertake an assessment of the immediate situation concerning the food security needs in the region. At the same time, the Secretary-General requested the Director-General of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) to lead an Inter-Agency Task Force on the United Nations Response to Long-term Food Security, Agricultural Development and Related Aspects in the Horn of Africa and to address longer-term food security issues in the region. The Task Force included the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), FAO, the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), UNDP, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), WFP, the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) and the World Bank.

53. As part of the two-pronged approach to address the drought in the Horn of Africa, the Executive Director of WFP pursued and reported on a short-term strategy to alleviate food shortages. On the long-term undertaking to achieve food security, the Director-General of FAO presented the report and conclusions of the Task Force to ACC at its second regular session in 2000 (see ACC/2000/20, paras. 46-49) and subsequently to the Economic and Social Council. The report outlined the broad scope of the United Nations response to the challenge of eliminating food insecurity and recommended a strategy with three core components: broadening opportunities for sustainable livelihoods; protecting the most needy; and creating an enabling environment for reducing food insecurity and poverty. The report, inter alia, called for national Governments to put together comprehensive country food security programmes (CFSPs). It also set up guidelines for formulating and implementing the CFSPs and identified support that the United Nations system could provide to the Governments in this regard. The CFSPs are to consist of a mix of investment projects, and policy and institutional reforms, implemented primarily by government agencies, but with important contributions from the private sector and non-governmental organizations. The projects will be financed by international financing institutions and bilateral donors. The United Nations system will also offer support, aimed at strengthening Governments' technical, planning and implementation capacities. For this purpose, a support programme is to be implemented by a "core team" operating from FAO headquarters, working in close collaboration with in-country national teams. Together, a wide range of planning and technical skills would be represented and there would also be resources for short-term ad hoc expertise so that the many different demands of the countries of the region for assistance in tackling food insecurity could be met.

54. ACC endorsed the recommendations of the Task Force and emphasized the need to ensure that the report should lead to concrete actions. It was underlined that, in view of the substantial decline in official development assistance (ODA) to the region, no impact on food insecurity could be expected without substantial public investment. The World Bank was requested to take the lead within a follow-up mechanism for the mobilization of resources to implement the strategy and programmes identified in the report.

55. A donor meeting was consequently convened by the World Bank and hosted by FAO on 22 March 2001. It was attended by 13 bilateral donor countries, the European Union (EU), the African Development Bank, UNDP, UNICEF, the permanent representatives to FAO of the Horn of Africa countries, the Executive Secretary of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) (composed of Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, the Sudan and Uganda) and observers for IFAD and WFP. The objectives of the meeting were to discuss a proposal, prepared by the World Bank in collaboration with FAO, that outlined a follow-up mechanism for initiating and supporting strengthened food security programmes at the country and regional levels, and to gather indications of financial and in-kind assistance from the donors concerned.

56. The meeting concurred with the general thrust of the proposal and agreed to provide coordinated support to Governments in food security programme formulation and implementation. A number of bilateral donors agreed to respond favourably to requests from Governments and from the IGAD secretariat to support Horn of Africa follow-up activities, both from existing programmes and from new initiatives. The World Bank, the African Development Bank, UNDP and FAO agreed to commit resources to various elements of the follow-up activities.

57. The meeting also agreed to convene a "regional consultation" in Nairobi in July 2001. This meeting will discuss follow-up arrangements, and agree on priorities and funding as well as on a time frame for

implementation. Preparations for the meeting, which is to be convened by the World Bank, will involve the affected countries, donors, non-governmental organizations and relevant United Nations agencies under the lead of IGAD and FAO.

V. Reform and renewal of the Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC)

58. Inter-agency collaboration and coordination received renewed impetus through reform measures adopted by ACC in 2000. In the course of the year, it carried out an in-depth review of its own functioning and that of its subsidiary machinery, drawing on the report and recommendations of an external review team. Three main considerations guided the review process: first, the objective of reinforcing a sense of ownership among Executive Heads of ACC processes and of facilitating continuous interaction and communications among them; second, the aim of further streamlining the ACC subsidiary machinery and raising the level of participation in that machinery, so as to expose more systematically senior programme managers to inter-agency processes, and thereby help integrate a system-wide perspective in the management and decision-making processes of individual organizations within the system; and third, the intent, cutting across the two objectives, to further strengthen the support that the inter-agency machinery provided to the intergovernmental processes, in particular to the Economic and Social Council.

59. As part of these reforms, two new high-level committees (on programmes and on management) have been established and mandated, in the first instance, to carry out a review of the subsidiary bodies using a zero-based approach, that is to say, their starting point should be what needs to be done, rather than what is being done at present. Permanent sub-bodies are to be kept to a minimum and their retention based on rigorous criteria. An important criterion for deciding on the most suitable coordination arrangements in the programme area is the intent to maximize the support that the ACC system provides to intergovernmental bodies, in particular the Economic and Social Council and its functional commissions.

60. As set out in its terms of reference, the High-Level Committee on Programmes (HLCP) is composed of senior representatives of ACC member organizations designated by their Executive Heads for this purpose — typically Deputy Executive Heads or senior officials in charge of strategic planning and of policy planning and programme development in their respective organizations. It is responsible to ACC for fostering system-wide cooperation and coordination as well as knowledge-sharing in policy, programme and operational areas, and is authorized to act on behalf of ACC within the scope of its responsibilities and to advise ACC on matters requiring its priority attention. HLCP is mandated to address issues of strategic planning, policy and programme development and implementation and to foster and support the integrated and coordinated preparation of and follow-up to major United Nations conferences and summits, including in particular the Millennium Summit of the United Nations. It is designed to serve as a forum for inter-agency dialogue, consultations and coordination on development and for the sharing of experiences on policy development, programming and monitoring modalities. The Committee also has the mandate to help translate strategies and policies into broad guidance for the elaboration of joint and related programmes and activities and to provide broad guidance and oversight of coordination and of effective programme implementation at the country level. HLCP is to adopt innovative, timely and cost-effective working mechanisms, including the establishment of time-bound task forces and other ad hoc inter-agency arrangements and the related designation of a lead agency or agencies.

61. The High-Level Committee on Management acts on behalf of and in the name of ACC on matters affecting the administrative management of all member organizations. It is charged with identifying and analysing administrative management issues of common concern that require a system-wide response. It is authorized to take decisions on behalf of the Executive Heads and to identify, promote and coordinate management reforms that will improve services, achieve productivity improvements and increase efficiency and effectiveness across the United Nations system. It is also responsible for ensuring the frank sharing of knowledge and experiences in order to enable organizations to profit from best practices and for facilitating the continuing dialogue on the reform processes and the management of change under way in the organizations of the system. Inter-agency

coordination in the ICT area has been identified for priority attention by the Committee.

62. ACC also decided to consolidate different secretariat capacities into a single secretariat, with co-locations in New York and Geneva. The renewed focus of ACC on system-wide strategic and policy issues and the delegation of authority to a streamlined ACC machinery underpin the need for a single jointly financed secretariat. The establishment of two high-level committees, along with greater reliance on flexible coordinating arrangements, required a multi-skilled, flexible secretariat that was not limited to servicing specific committees. By promoting linkages and synergies among the work programmes of the ACC subsidiary bodies, a single secretariat is expected, without detracting from dedicated secretariat support to different committees, to bring greater coherence to the support provided to the work of ACC and to facilitate more effective, integrated follow-up to ACC decisions. It will also make it possible to support more systematic and continuous dialogue among organizations of the system through dedicated information networks and other means; and will strengthen the capacity to convey to Governments and other partners more coherent and integrated information on progress in the work of the system as a whole. By maximizing the utilization of staff and other resources, the single ACC secretariat is expected to enhance the cost-effectiveness of secretariat support for the ACC machinery.

63. The round of reforms outlined above consolidates the major evolution that has taken place over the years in approaches to inter-agency cooperation and coordination and in the role that ACC has been called to play in fostering unity of purpose and action taken within the United Nations system. This evolution has been recognized in a number of successive Economic and Social Council resolutions and was recently detailed in a JIU report (A/54/288) on the review of ACC and its machinery which was acted on by the Council in resolution 1999/66. That report, inter alia, raised the question of the desirability of a new name for ACC which would better reflect the present state of affairs. Indeed, the reference to "coordination" in the name of the Committee had been defined narrowly in the original Council resolution (13 (III) of 21 September 1946) in terms of the "implementation of the agreements entered into between the United Nations and the specialized agencies" (para. 2) and the word "administrative" was added by the Council in 1949 to distinguish ACC from its own "Coordination Committee". At the October 2000 session of ACC, the Executive Heads concluded that a new name for ACC would indeed be desirable to highlight both its function as a "board" concerned with fostering the unity of the entire United Nations system, and its capacity to bring together all its member organizations at the highest executive level. A new name for ACC does not entail a change in the relationship agreements between the United Nations and the specialized agencies, including the Bretton Woods institutions. ACC proposes therefore, subject to the Council's concurrence to modify its name to "United Nations System's Chief Executives Board (C.E.B.)".

VI. Preparations for major events of system-wide importance

A. World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance

64. ACC was briefed on and considered a number of upcoming important events. The United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights briefed ACC on the forthcoming World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance. She invited organizations of the system to participate actively in the preparatory process and to bring to it their own perspectives in dealing with racial discrimination. ACC invited its members to participate actively in the preparatory process of the World Conference and to contribute fully to ensuring its success.

65. An inter-agency meeting chaired by the Executive Coordinator for the World Conference was held in Geneva in March 2001. Members of ACC stressed their commitment to participating actively in the preparatory process which will shape a draft global declaration and programme of action. In addition, many of the ACC members are carrying out specific activities related to the Conference, including UNDP, the regional commissions, ILO, UNESCO, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), UNICEF and the World Bank.

66. UNESCO, for example, has focused its efforts through its National Commissions, UNESCO Clubs, and major human rights research and training

institutions to mobilize support for the objectives of the International Year of Mobilization against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance and the World Conference by all actors in political, social and cultural life. It has also prepared its own plan of action related to the World Conference. UNDP has taken measures to ensure that the Resident Coordinators/Resident Representatives and the country teams are engaged at the country level in supporting processes related to the World Conference. They were also requested to provide country-specific information on activities in the field to combat racism. Based on international labour standards, ILO is providing a substantive contribution to the full realization of economic and social rights, in particular as concerns discrimination against migrant workers, indigenous and tribal peoples, women and working children. The regional commission secretariats in Bangkok, Addis Ababa and Santiago actively supported and assisted in the organization of regional expert seminars, and UNDP offices in Santiago, Dakar and Tehran provided valuable logistic support to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights in organizing regional intergovernmental preparatory meetings. UNFPA will organize an International Round Table on Indigenous Peoples and Reproductive Health and Gender in June 2001.

B. High-level international intergovernmental event on financing for development

67. With respect to the high-level international intergovernmental event on financing for development, ACC members at the second regular session in 2000 noted the importance attached to that event by member States and welcomed the involvement and participation in the preparatory process of all "relevant stakeholders", including in particular the Bretton Woods institutions. Executive Heads saw the event as an important opportunity to, inter alia, further the implementation of the goals and commitments of the Millennium Summit of the United Nations. They also emphasized the importance of the event's addressing, within its agenda, interfaces between trade and financial issues and, in that context, achieving concrete advances in debt relief and in reversing the trend of declining ODA. ACC members expressed strong support for the high-level international intergovernmental event on financing for development and gave assurances of the full participation of their organizations in the preparatory process and the event itself.

68. A number of ACC members, the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Trade Organization (WTO), the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) and UNDP, as well as ILO and the regional commissions, were involved in the preparation of a report that the Secretary-General presented to the Preparatory Committee for the High-Level International Intergovernmental Event on Financing for Development at its second substantive session (12-23 February 2001) (A/AC.257/12). The report addressed the following areas: mobilizing domestic financial resources for development; mobilizing international resources for development: foreign direct investment (FDI) and other private flows; trade; increasing international financial cooperation for development through, inter alia, ODA; debt; and addressing systemic issues: enhancing the coherence and consistency of the international monetary, financial and trading systems in support of development.

69. Five regional consultations have, meanwhile, been organized by the regional commissions. These consultations were attended by government delegations and also non-governmental organizations, civil society organizations and the business sector. They were intended to pave the way for the ultimate negotiations related to financing for development and allow for consideration of region-specific perspectives and needs. Indeed, they were instrumental in identifying a number of specific actions or institutional considerations in each region related to financing for development.

70. At the intergovernmental level, the preparatory process includes consultations between the Bureau of the Preparatory Committee and the executive boards of the World Bank and IMF which have so far proved to be extremely productive and augur very well for a successful outcome of the final event.

C. Third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries

71. The Secretary-General of UNCTAD briefed ACC at its regular sessions of 2000 on the challenges ahead

in the context of the forthcoming Third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries to be held in Brussels in May 2001. ACC adopted a statement highlighting the importance of the conference, declaring its full commitment to supporting the conference secretariat in the preparatory process and pledging to work with all stakeholders to ensure its success. Subsequently, in 2000 and more so in 2001, the ACC members were individually and in groupings involved in supporting preparations for the conference.

72. Preparation for the Third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries has during 2000, helped to refocus attention of the international community on the predicament of the least developed countries. Despite their efforts to reform their economies, the countries in this group have not been able to reap the benefits of globalization. Many of them were, in fact, further marginalized in relation to the world economy during the 1990s.

73. Trade being a major component of the effort to counteract this marginalization, ACC followed closely during 2000 the efforts to re-engineer and give a new dynamism to the Integrated Framework (IF) for Trade-related Technical Assistance to Least Developed Countries. The outcome of these efforts by the World Trade Organization, along with UNDP, IMF, the International Trade Centre (ITC), UNCTAD and the World Bank, was the commitment of these agencies to an enhanced IF. Its main objectives are to mainstream trade into a country's overall development strategy (in most cases the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) or the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) process and ensure that trade-related technical assistance is responsive to the trade policy goals of the concerned country. ECA and ESCAP have also been reorienting their programmes to strengthen their support for the development of least developed countries in their respective regions.

74. The enhanced IF, which has been subsequently endorsed by the General Assembly, has begun its operations through a pilot scheme which will be progressively expanded to encompass all the least developed countries. To support the mainstreaming process, a Trust Fund has been established.

75. This arrangement breaks new ground in enabling a group of international agencies, with the participation of donors and least developed countries, to coordinate policies to achieve better integration of developing countries into the global economic environment. It is an ambitious programme responding to a major challenge for the least developed countries and for the international community as a whole, which will continue to receive ACC's full attention and support.

D. Special session of the General Assembly on children: follow-up to the World Summit for Children

76. The Executive Director of UNICEF briefed ACC at its second regular session on the special session of the General Assembly on children to be held from 19 to 21 September 2001. It was indicated that member States were being encouraged to include younger persons in their delegations. ACC members were urged to participate in the special session and in the preparatory process leading up to the event. Activities by agencies include providing comments on the draft outcome document by submitting information on progress achieved since the World Summit for Children, as requested by the Assembly in its resolution 55/26.

77. This gathering is the first 10-year review of a major world conference. It follows a decade of significant achievements for children produced in the follow-up to the 1990 World Summit for Children as well as rapid and near-universal adoption and ratification of the Convention on the Rights of the Child.[19] There are strong interest and involvement by Member States and civil society.

78. Several agencies were actively contributing in various ways to the preparation for the special session on children. Among them, WHO has been closely involved in the preparatory process, in view of the central role of health — 23 of the 27 goals of the 1990 World Summit for Children have an explicit health focus — and WHO's commitment to it, both for its own sake and as a means of realizing child rights and reducing poverty. WHO's submission, covering progress towards achieving the 1990 goals, drew on inputs from many technical departments and Regional Offices and reaffirmed the importance of addressing the unfinished agenda from 1990 and the need to address new issues, such as HIV and specific populations, in particular neonates and adolescents.

E. Special session of the General Assembly on HIV/AIDS

79. ACC continued to stress the need for concerted action to address the HIV/AIDS epidemic, noting, at its spring 2000 session, that while the organizations of the United Nations system were increasingly working together, the global battle against AIDS remained a major challenge. Executive Heads reiterated their strong concern over the serious situation of AIDS in Africa and stressed the need for increased advocacy and action in countries where the epidemic was still at an early stage, notably in South and South-East Asia, including applying lessons learned in sub-Saharan Africa.

80. ACC called for a renewed effort to consolidate the various guidelines for use by country teams through the Resident Coordinator system and the thematic groups as they related to HIV/AIDS. It urged organizations of the system to support and complement the efforts of the co-sponsoring organizations of UNAIDS, particularly by: (a) considering the most effective way of integrating AIDS-related issues into their activities, in accordance with their mandates; (b) bringing these issues to the attention of their respective governing bodies and seeking budgetary allocations, as appropriate, for action in this area; and (c) giving guidance to their country-based representatives (or headquarters and regional staff, as appropriate) to take part in joint planning and programming on AIDS in the context of the country-based United Nations system thematic groups on HIV/AIDS.

81. ACC also called for developing appropriate guidance for the Resident Coordinator system on a coordinated country level approach to fighting HIV/AIDS, on the understanding that this should not add to the number of existing guidelines but should help to focus and consolidate them, and would be consistent with the role and functions of HIV/AIDS theme groups. Thus, a new note was proposed, namely, the "Guidance note for the United Nations Resident Coordinator System: towards a multisectoral response to HIV/AIDS". It further requested the Office for Inter-Agency Affairs, in collaboration with UNAIDS, to ensure that work initiated by the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) to develop strategies for the prevention and control of HIV/AIDS in conflict situations was coordinated with related ongoing work in the United Nations system as a whole, so as to strengthen national responses to HIV/AIDS. All organizations of the United Nations system were encouraged to participate actively, together with the UNAIDS secretariat and UNAIDS co-sponsoring organizations, in the development of the United Nations system strategic plan on HIV/AIDS, 2001-2006.

82. On issues relating to United Nations staff and dependants living with HIV/AIDS, ACC agreed that high priority should be given to ensuring adequate insurance coverage and access to care for all United Nations staff, regardless of category. Drawing upon a comparative study on medical insurance schemes for national staff within the United Nations system and current data on the number of HIV-positive staff and their dependants, to present proposals for improving and harmonizing medical insurance coverage for national staff within the United Nations system. ACC further requested the early finalization and distribution to all Resident Coordinators and members of country teams of the "Guidance note on HIV/AIDS in the United Nations workplace", urging that as many as possible of the measures embodied in the note be put in place by the end of the year. (Both of the notes referred to in paras. 81 and 82 were finalized and issued in March 2001.)

83. ACC was also briefed on the special session of the General Assembly on HIV/AIDS, to be held from 25 to 27 June 2001, by the Executive Director of UNICEF, in her capacity as Chair of the UNAIDS Committee of Co-sponsoring Organizations. ACC requested its members to help ensure the success of this special session of the Assembly.

84. The UNAIDS secretariat has been designated as the substantive secretariat of the special session. A Reference Group, chaired by the UNAIDS secretariat, and comprising technical staff of the UNAIDS co-sponsoring organizations (UNICEF, UNFPA, UNDP, UNDCP, UNESCO, WHO and the World Bank), other relevant United Nations bodies, including ILO, FAO, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), as well as relevant departments of the United Nations Secretariat, was established in November 2000. The mandate of the Reference Group is to provide technical support to the preparatory process of the special session, including preparation of documents, organization of round-table discussions and information activities.

85. WHO, UNICEF, UNDP and the World Bank have been designated by the Reference Group to spearhead the preparations of the four round tables of the special session, in close consultation with the UNAIDS secretariat and with the technical support of all the other members of the Reference Group. Agencies will thus provide their technical expertise according to their respective mandates following the themes of the round tables: HIV/AIDS prevention and care; HIV/AIDS and human rights; the social and economic impact of the epidemic and the strengthening of national capacities to combat HIV/AIDS; and international funding and cooperation to address the challenges of the AIDS epidemic.

86. The seven UNAIDS co-sponsoring agencies are also part of a United Nations Information Steering Committee, co-chaired by the UNAIDS secretariat and the Department of Public Information of the United Nations Secretariat. This group was created to elaborate and implement a comprehensive public information strategy to raise global HIV/AIDS awareness and build international support for the special session.

87. At the regional level, ECA and ESCAP, in collaboration with the UNAIDS secretariat, have held special events in support of the global initiative and in preparation for the special session of the General Assembly, with ECA having organized an "African Development Forum" at the highest political level focusing on Africa's needs to fight the HIV/AIDS pandemic. The African Development Forum on HIV/AIDS, which took place in Addis Ababa in December 2000, was significant, in terms both of involving the various stakeholders and of charting out the course for concerted action to face the challenge posed by the pandemic throughout the continent.

88. At the country level, the Resident Coordinators and United Nations country teams are working with national Governments in order to facilitate their active participation at regional and global events in preparation for the special session. They are also working to mobilize national authorities and to assist them in the preparation of their position and contribution to the special session. They also support activities undertaken by Governments in preparation for the special session. The United Nations theme groups on HIV/AIDS are particularly instrumental in this regard.

89. Efforts related to the availability and affordability of drugs against HIV/AIDS constitute one example of system members' working together. In 2000, in response to calls from the Secretary-General inviting the private sector to engage in partnerships for expanding the global response to HIV/AIDS and to support the International Partnership against HIV/AIDS in Africa (IPAA), a United Nations initiative spearheaded by UNAIDS to curtail the spread of HIV and reduce its impact in Africa, the Executive Heads of UNAIDS, WHO, the World Bank, UNICEF and UNFPA reached agreement with five international pharmaceutical companies related to their providing AIDS-fighting drugs at or near cost. More recently, in April 2001, the Secretary-General, the Director-General of WHO and the Executive Director of UNAIDS met with chief executive officers and senior executives of six pharmaceutical companies and came to agreements on what further steps needed to be taken to improve access for developing countries to better health care, HIV medicines and HIV-related medicines, as part of further action to combat AIDS, including prevention, education and research. While noting that the prices for HIV/AIDS-related medicines have been coming down as a result of companies' individual actions, the Secretary-General urged the companies to continue and accelerate these initiatives.

VII. Administrative questions

Staff security

90. During 2000, the issue of staff security and safety remained high in the ACC agenda. Executive Heads adopted two major statements on the subject in the course of the year. At its spring 2000 session, ACC noted with satisfaction actions under way — at both Headquarters and field levels — to enhance the security and safety of United Nations system personnel through inter-agency collaboration, and the efforts in this regard of the Office of the United Nations Security Coordinator (UNSECOORD) as overall coordinator of the United Nations system. It expressed appreciation for the renewed attention being given to staff security issues by the General Assembly, the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council and, reaffirming the primary responsibility of Governments for the security and safety of United Nations system personnel, requested Governments that had not yet

done so, to ratify the Convention on the Safety of United Nations and Associated Personnel[20] and the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court.[21] ACC also reiterated its commitment to continue to advocate the cause of staff security and safety before the intergovernmental bodies of the system and in its dialogue with member States. It endorsed the intention to achieve a more secure and stable system of funding security expenditures, preferably through the regular budget, and stressed the need for additional funding for security training. It also called for the expeditious implementation of priority security measures, including those relating to field security officers, training and communications.

91. At its October meeting, ACC issued a statement (see ACC/2000/20, para. 68) strongly supporting the measures being proposed by the Secretary-General to Member States in his report on the safety and security of staff (A/55/494) aimed at achieving a more stable and secure system of funding security expenditures and ensuring that adequate levels of staff were available at both the Headquarters and field levels to manage security. It reiterated its decision in 1999 that staff participation in security training programmes should be made mandatory and called on Executive Heads to implement that training across the board and to take appropriate measures to ensure that staff members, and especially field representatives of all organizations, attended. ACC also stressed that the Minimum Operating Security Standards should be in place at all duty stations. ACC members also strongly expressed the view that Governments should ensure that threats and attacks on United Nations personnel were not carried out with impunity, and that those guilty of such offences were prosecuted to the full extent of the law.

92. In view of the vital importance of staff security and safety to all organizations of the system, ACC decided to keep the matter under continuing review.

VIII. Elements of the programme of work for ACC in 2001

93. During 2001, ACC will continue to focus on issues of system-wide significance that require coordinated responses from the United Nations system. Its programme of work for 2001 will draw, as in the past, upon the policy issues of priority concern to the central intergovernmental bodies as well as to ACC member organizations. 2001 will mark the first year in which the new arrangements for the functioning of ACC will be put into practice and ACC will be able to benefit from the work of its two new high-level committees.

94. ACC will continue in 2001 its reflection on the response of the system to the challenges of globalization. The Millennium Declaration represents a remarkable degree of consensus on the unique role the system can play both in helping overcome the growing divides that globalization is bringing about and in seizing the new opportunities for development it carries. In pursuing its discussion on the matter, ACC is expected to focus in particular on how poverty programmes, employment-generation and social services can be sustained in the policy environment of fiscal contraction and liberalization that is typically associated with economic globalization.

95. ACC is also expected to pursue its more general discussion on the response of the system to the United Nations Millennium Declaration and address both overall arrangements for the system's contribution to the monitoring of the follow-up, and measures that can be taken to strengthen the system's own impact in advancing the implementation of its goals and targets, particularly those relating to poverty eradication and development.

96. Still within the overall framework of the implementation of the Millennium Declaration, ACC will take up the response of the system to the call by the General Assembly in its resolution 55/162 on the follow-up to the outcome of the Millennium Summit "to strengthen the broad range of its engagement in Africa, with a view to intensifying support for poverty eradication and sustainable development, for combating diseases and pandemics and for the process of conflict prevention and the consolidation of democracy" (para. 8). In this context, ACC will review and appraise the various initiatives being undertaken by organizations of the system in Africa to ensure that the many inter-agency processes in support of African development reinforce each other and lead to tangible results.

97. In the course of 2001, ACC will also continue to give priority to the coordinated and integrated follow-up to global conferences. It will keep under review the preparatory processes for upcoming major intergovernmental events to ensure inter-agency

collaboration and effective follow-up. These events include the Third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries (14-20 May 2001), the special session of the General Assembly on HIV/AIDS (25-27 June 2001), the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance (31 August-7 September 2001), the special session of the Assembly on Children (19-21 September 2001), the high-level international intergovernmental event on financing for development (first quarter of 2002) and the World Summit on the Information Society (2003).

IX. Assistance to countries invoking Article 55 of the Charter of the United Nations

98. The Committee for Programme and Coordination (CPC), in paragraph 293 of its report on the work of the first part of its fortieth session,[22] "stressed the important role of ACC in the implementation of the relevant intergovernmental mandates for mobilizing and monitoring the economic assistance efforts by the international community and the United Nations system to States confronted with special economic problems arising from the carrying out of preventive or enforcement measures imposed by the Security Council, and in identifying solutions to the special economic problems of those States as well as in providing support to the efforts of the States affected by the developments in the Balkans for their economic recovery, structural adjustment and development". In paragraph 294 of the same report, CPC "recommended that ACC continue its work for the implementation of the relevant intergovernmental mandates and report on its progress in the context of its annual overview reports". Information on the measures taken by the United Nations system to provide assistance to third States affected by the implementation of sanctions imposed on Iraq and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia was first contained in the report of the Secretary-General on the question of special economic problems of States as a result of sanctions imposed under Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations (A/48/573-S/26705), and thereafter in the annual overview reports of ACC (E/1993/81, E/1994/19, E/1995/21, E/1996/18 and Add.1, E/1997/54 and Corr.1, E/1998/21, E/1999/48 and E/2000/53). In addition, economic assistance to States affected by the implementation of the Security Council resolutions imposing sanctions on the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia was the subject of a series of five reports of the Secretary-General submitted to the General Assembly (A/49/356, A/50/423, A/51/356, A/52/535 and A/54/534). Last year, the report on this subject was superseded by the report of the Secretary-General on economic assistance to the Eastern European States affected by the developments in the Balkans (A/55/620 and Corr.1).

99. The General Assembly, in its resolution 55/170 of 14 December 2000 on economic assistance to the Eastern European States affected by the developments in the Balkans, took note of the report of the Secretary-General on the subject (A/55/620 and Corr.1) and the conclusions contained therein, and welcomed the support already provided by the international community, in particular by the European Union (EU) and other major donors, to the affected States to assist them in coping with their special economic problems during the transition period following the developments in the Balkans. In the same resolution, the Assembly expressed concern at the persistence of special economic problems confronting the Eastern European States affected by the developments in the Balkans, in particular their impact on regional trade and economic relations and on the navigation along the Danube and on the Adriatic Sea, and invited all States and the relevant international organizations, both within and outside the United Nations system, in particular the international financial institutions, to continue to take into account the special needs and situations of the affected States in providing support and assistance to their efforts for economic recovery, structural adjustment and development. The Secretary-General was requested to report to the Assembly at its fifty-sixth session on the implementation of resolution 55/170.

100. Furthermore, the General Assembly, in its resolution 55/157 of 12 December 2000, welcomed the report of the Secretary-General (A/53/312) containing a summary of the deliberations and main findings of the ad hoc expert group meeting on developing a methodology for assessing the consequences incurred by third States as a result of preventive or enforcement measures and on exploring innovative and practical measures of international assistance to the affected third States, and renewed its invitation to States and relevant international organizations within and outside

the United Nations system that had not yet done so to provide their views regarding the report of the ad hoc expert group meeting. It also requested the Secretary-General to ensure that the competent units within the Secretariat developed the adequate capacity and appropriate modalities, technical procedures and guidelines in pursuance of Assembly resolutions 50/51, 51/208, 52/162, 53/107 and 54/107, and to present to the Assembly any further views that he might have, as appropriate, on the deliberations and main findings, including the recommendations, of the ad hoc expert group on the implementation of the provisions of the Charter related to assistance to third States affected by the application of sanctions, taking into account the views of States, the organizations of the United Nations system, international financial institutions and other international organizations, as well as the forthcoming report of the informal working group of the Security Council on general issues relating to sanctions.

101. In the same resolution, the General Assembly reaffirmed the important role of the Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and CPC in mobilizing and monitoring the economic assistance efforts by the international community and the United Nations system on behalf of States confronted with special economic problems arising from the carrying out of preventive or enforcement measures imposed by the Security Council and in identifying solutions to the special economic problems of those States. The Assembly took note of the decision of the Economic and Social Council, in its resolution 2000/32 of 28 July 2000, to continue consideration of the question of assistance to third States affected by the application of sanctions, and decided to transmit the most recent report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations related to assistance to third States affected by the application of sanctions (A/55/295 and Add.1) to the Council at its substantive session of 2001. The Assembly invited the organizations of the United Nations system, international financial institutions, regional organizations and Member States to address more specifically and directly, where appropriate, special economic problems of third States affected by sanctions imposed under Chapter VII of the Charter and, for that purpose, to consider improving procedures for consultations to maintain a constructive dialogue with such States, inter alia, through regular and frequent meetings as well as, where appropriate, special meetings between the affected third States and the donor community, with the participation of United Nations agencies and other international organizations.

102. The organizations of the United Nations system are fully aware of the importance of addressing the needs of the affected States. As appropriate, they are committed to bringing these concerns to the attention of their governing bodies with a view to mobilizing resources for programmes of assistance to States confronted with special economic problems as a result of implementing preventive or enforcement measures imposed by the Security Council.

Notes

[1] See General Assembly resolution 55/2.

[2] *Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing, 4-15 September 1995* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.96.IV.13), chap. I, resolution 1, annex II.

[3] Ibid., annex I.

[4] General Assembly resolution S-23/3, annex.

[5] General Assembly resolution 34/180, annex.

[6] General Assembly resolution 54/4, annex.

[7] General Assembly resolution S-24/2, annex.

[8] Ibid., sect. I.

[9] Ibid., sect. II.

[10] Ibid., sect. III.

[11] Ibid., para. 155.

[12] *Report of the World Summit for Social Development, Copenhagen, 6-12 March 1995* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.96.IV.8), chap. I, resolution 1, annex I.

[13] Ibid., annex II.

[14] See information note entitled "Compilation of summaries of reports on the implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development and the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly provided by the United Nations system", www.un.org/esa/socdev/geneva2000/follow-up.

[15] General Assembly resolution 55/25, annex I.

[16] Ibid., annex II.

[17] Ibid., annex III.

[18] United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, *The Dakar Framework for Action; Education for All: Meeting our Collective Commitments* (Paris, 2000).

[19] General Assembly resolution 44/25, annex.

[20] General Assembly resolution 49/59, annex.

[21] A/CONF.183/9.

[22] *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-fifth Session, Supplement No. 16* (A/55/16 and Corr.1 and 2), part one.